Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 10, line 18, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--The hydrophilic polymer particles are hydrophilic to a substantial depth, with only a core region of the particles being hydrophobic. A "substantial depth" means a depth that is sufficiently large that when a lithographic printing master made from a coated precursor in accordance with the invention is employed in printing, the hydrophilic areas of the coating will not erode sufficiently to expose the ~~hydrophilic~~ hydrophobic core of the particles and thereby detrimentally affect printing quality to a material degree. Being hydrophilic to a substantial depth stands in contrast to the various particle types discussed in patent application EP01 057622, which are either entirely hydrophilic or have only a superficial hydrophilic surface region or coating. The polymer particles of the present invention are distinctly hydrophilic, compared with the hydrophobic particles disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,550,237. Without wishing the invention to be limited in any way, the inventors believe that the cores of the particles are dominated by the hydrophobic polymer derived from the hydrophobic monomer, while the bulk of any given particle is dominated by the hydrophilic polymer. It is believed that there is a transition region wherein there are co-polymers of both the hydrophobic monomer and the hydrophilic polymer with the bonding compound (itself preferably hydrophilic as a polymer), producing thereby a particle that has three regions, namely, an inner hydrophobic core, a transition region that is largely hydrophilic, due to the nature of the preferred bonding compounds, and the bulk of the particle, being dominated by the hydrophilic polymer.--